

THE WATCHTOWER HERESY VERSUS THE BIBLE

by

Ted Dencher

Copyright © 1961

CHAPTER FIVE

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT—FOR WHOM AND WHERE?

THE WATCHTOWER SOCIETY teaches that the body is the soul, and it is annihilated at death. They deny any punishment beyond that. Let us turn to their official publications for statements on this subject. The booklet entitled *Hope* has this to say on page 17:

When those called “Protestants” broke away from the Roman Catholic organization they rejected the “purgatory” doctrine, but held on to many others of its doctrines, including a “hell of torment in fire and brimstone.” The “Protestants” teach that at death of the wicked, those not church members, the soul leaves the body and is immediately consigned to such religious “hell,” to suffer there eternally, without escape.

When told that such would be a gross injustice to the creature, those religionists quote the words of one of Job’s three tormentors: “Shall mortal man be more just than God?” (Job 4:17). . . Jehovah is a God of perfect justice, and therefore he does not subscribe to any such doctrine or arrangement of conscious torment of creatures.

From page 32 of this booklet, we read:

Religion’s doctrine of temporary or eternal torment after man’s death is based upon a fundamental lie, and hence cannot be true.

Regarding the subject of Gehenna, about which we shall deal later, the booklet says, page 28:

The fire-lit valley of Hinnom, or “Gehenna of fire,” is otherwise spoken of as “a lake of fire burning with brimstone,” into which the demonized opposers of Jehovah’s THEOCRATIC GOVERNMENT by Christ Jesus are cast and destroyed.

Then this enlightening statement on page 38:

Where, then, are the dead? Religion has blinded the dupes of the demons so that they cannot see the plain and simple answers to these questions and which the all-wise God gives in his Word.

The Watchtower magazine of February 15, 1954 discusses the subject of “The Rich Man and Lazarus” found in Luke, chapter 16, page 109, paragraph No. 2:

Granting, for the sake of argument, that his listeners did think it was an actual incident, that, far from proving that it was, proves just the opposite. How so? Because we are explicitly told that the reason Jesus spoke in parables or illustrations was—that people might understand?—no, but that they might NOT understand. Note his words: “To you it is granted to understand the sacred secrets of the kingdom of God, but for the rest it is in illustrations, in order that, though looking, they may look in vain, and though hearing, they may not get the meaning.” (Luke 8:10 NW) Obviously, whatever meaning his listeners got from the illustration, WAS BOUND TO BE THE WRONG ONE (Emphasis mine).

Yet He told the apostles “**Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God,**” but that does not convince the Watchtower.

The fact that the Bible does not say this account is a parable does not prevent *The Watchtower* from making it a parable. If it suits their convenience, it becomes a parable. What reasons do they offer? The same issue of *The Watchtower* on page 111 says:

According to the Scriptures heaven and Hades (Sheol) are at opposite extremes. (Psalm 139:8; Luke 10: 15.). Could we imagine those in one place seeing those in the other and carrying on a conversation? And were the rich man in a burning hell would he ask for just a drop of water to cool his tongue? How much relief would that bring? Would it last to reach him? Could anyone get anywhere near a burning hell with just a drop of water? Obviously this is a figure of speech even as is Abraham’s bosom, yes, and as are all the rest of Jesus’ words on that occasion.

Since the Bible says, Hebrews 9:27: “**And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT,**” we had better look carefully into the Scriptures to see what they teach.

A favorite text of the Witnesses is Genesis 2:7, which satisfies them that there will never be any judgment after death. It reads: “**And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.**” They hold that “soul” means only physical life. Now here is what they do not know: The Hebrew words involved in this text are: “. . . **breathed (NEPHACH) into his nostrils the breath (NESHAMAH) of life; and man became a living soul (NEPHESH CHAI).**” The word NESHAMAH used here is the same word found at Isaiah 57:16 for SOUL: “**For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the SOULS which I have made.**”

The Hebrew word CHAI has 11 meanings; it is translated *living* 73 times. The word NEPHESH has 22 meanings, being translated *person* 30 times. So we see from the way the above verse is constructed that Jehovah breathed into man the NESHAMAH (SOUL) of life, and man became a LIVING PERSON (NEPHESH CHAI). In harmony with this Jehovah is called “**the God of the spirits of all flesh**” at Numbers 16:22, again showing that man is more than just body.

Along this same line consider Psalm 143:3 and Lamentations 3:6. The texts being similar, we will quote just the one (Psalms): “**For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.**”

He likened his being made to dwell in “*dark places*” as that of the condition of the dead. He was alive and consciously dwelling in those “*dark places*.” He was not extinct or annihilated while there, and he indicated the “**dead**” are in the same condition!

Again, consider Jesus’ words as recorded at Matthew 22: 31, 32: **“But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? GOD IS NOT THE GOD OF THE DEAD, BUT OF THE LIVING.”**

Here are noteworthy portions of *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, Vol. V, page 323:

Now the drift of the argument is to prove, (1.) That there is a future state, another life after this, in which the righteous shall be truly and constantly happy. This is proved from what God said; I am the God of Abraham . . . (2.) That the soul is immortal, and the body shall rise again, to be united; if the former point be gained, these will follow; but they are likewise proved by considering the time when God spoke this; it was to Moses at the bush, long after Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were dead and buried; and yet God saith not “I was,” or “have been,” but, I am the God of Abraham. Now God is not the God of the dead, but of the living . . . If, when Abraham died, there had been an end of him, there had been an end likewise of God’s relation to him as his God; but at that time, when God spoke to Moses, he was the God of Abraham, and therefore Abraham must then be alive; which proves the immortality of the soul in a state of bliss; and that, by consequence, infers the resurrection of the body; for there is such an inclination in the human soul to its body, as would make a final and eternal separation inconsistent with the bliss of those that have God for their God. The Sadducee’s notion was, that the union between body and soul is so close, that, when the body dies, the soul dies with it . . . Lastly, We have the issue of this dispute. The Sadducee’s were put to silence (v. 34), and so put to shame.

Just what is the historic doctrine of Hell that Jehovah’s Witnesses deny? We shall now look into this teaching which the Church has held for nearly 2000 years. A quotation of Professor Samuel C. Bartlett in Dr. William Smith’s *Dictionary of the Bible*, on the subject of Hell, page 1039:

Sheol, the unknown region into which the dying disappeared, was naturally and always invested with gloom to a sinful race. But the vague term was capable of becoming more or less definite according to the writer’s thought. Most commonly it was simply the grave, as we use the phrase; sometimes the state of death in general; sometimes a dismal place opposed to heaven, e.g., Job 11:8; Psalm 139:8; Amos 9:2; sometimes a place of extreme suffering, Psalm 86:13; 9:17; Proverbs 23:14. No passage in the O. T., we believe, implies that the spirits of the good and bad were brought together. The often cited passage (Isaiah 14:9) implies the contrary, showing us only the heathen kings meeting another king in mockery.

To translate this Hebrew term, the LXX adopted the nearest Greek word, Hades, which by derivation signifies the invisible world. But the Greek word would not carry Greek notions into Hebrew theology. When Christ and his Apostles came, they naturally laid hold of this Greek word already introduced into religious use. But, of course, they employed it from their own standpoint. And as it was the purpose of their mission to make more distinct the doctrine of retribution, and as under their teachings death became still more terrible to the natural man, so throughout the N. T. Hades seems invariably viewed as the enemy of man, and from its alliance with sin and its doom, as hostile to Christ and his church. In many instances it is with strict propriety translated “hell.”

Even in Acts 2:27, 31 quoted from the O. T., Hades is the abode of the wicked dead. In Luke 16:23 it certainly is the place of torment. In Matthew 16:18 it is the abode and centre of those powers that were arrayed against Christ and his church. In Luke 10:5, Matthew 11: 15, it is the opposite of heaven.

The word occurs, according to the Received Text, in I Corinthians 15:55; but the reading is not supported by the older MSS. The only remaining instances are the four that occur in Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14 where, though in three of these cases personified, it is still viewed as a terror to man and a foe to Christ and his kingdom, over which at length he has gained the victory. While therefore Gehenna is the term which most distinctly designates the place of future punishment, Hades also repeatedly is nearly its equivalent; and notwithstanding the greater vagueness of the terms, it remains true, as Augustine asserts, that neither Hades or Sheol are ever used in good sense, or (we may add) in any other than a sense that carries the notion of terror.

What about this subject of Gehenna? *The Watchtower Society* said in the Hope booklet, previously quoted, that Gehenna is where all non-Jehovah's Witnesses go. *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, page 879 says:

The "valley of Hinnom," or "of the son," or "children of Hinnom" (A. V.), a deep narrow glen to the South of Jerusalem, where, after the introduction of the worship of the fire-gods by Ahaz, the idolatrous Jews offered their children to Molech (II Chronicles 28:3; 33:6; Jeremiah 7:31; 19:2-6). In consequence of these abominations the valley was polluted by Josiah (II Kings 23:10); subsequently to which it became the common lay-stall of the city, where the dead bodies of criminals, and the carcasses of animals, and every other kind of filth was cast, and, according to late and somewhat questionable authorities, the combustible portions consumed with fire. From the depth and narrowness of the gorge, and perhaps, its ever-burning fires, as well as from its being the receptacle of all sorts of putrefying matter, and all that defiled the holy city, it became in later times the image of the place of everlasting punishment, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;" in which place the Talmudists placed the mouth of hell: "There are two palm-trees in the Valley of Hinnom, between which a smoke ariseth . . . and this is the door of Gehenna."

Note what Ezra Abbott (Assistant Librarian of Harvard College) wrote on this subject in *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, page 880:

There is a remarkable passage in the book of Enoch which deserves notice here, as perhaps the earliest example in Jewish writings of the representation of Gehenna or the Valley of Hinnom as a place of punishment for the wicked . . . After the description, the passage continues thus: "Then I said: 'What means this blessed land which is full of trees, and this accursed valley in the midst?' Then Uriel, one of the holy angels with me, answered and said: 'This accursed valley is for those who shall be accursed to eternity: here must assemble all those who utter with their mouths unseemly speeches against God, and blaspheme his glory; here they are to be gathered, and this is the place of their punishment. And in the last times will the spectacle be given to the righteous of a just judgment on these for ever and ever; for which those who have found mercy will praise the Lord of glory, the eternal King.'" (See Isaiah 66:22-24.)

"This," remarks a writer in the National Review, "is the earliest expression of the Jewish belief respecting the scene and mode of the Messianic crisis . . . The Judgment, it is plain, was to take place near Jerusalem: and while the temple hill was to be the citadel of reward to the pious, the punishment of the wicked, in order to be in sight, would take place in the Valley of Hinnom below.

This spot, it is quite evident, is not figuratively referred to, as furnishing merely a name and symbol for the invisible penalties of another world, but literally designated as their royal topographical seat; precisely as the neighboring heights are taken to be the proper metropolis of the elect.

Both physical and historical causes inclined the Jewish imagination to select this particular valley for the fatal purpose. Stretching towards the volcanic district to the South, it is said to have emitted at times a smoke which betrayed subterranean fires, and which put on the convulsions of the Asphaltite basin. And as the frequent scene of the rites of Molech, it was associated with many horrors, and had received the curse of the prophets.”

On the subject of “The Valley of Hinnom,” page 1078:

From its ceremonial defilement, and from the detestable and abominable fire of Molech, if not from the supposed ever-burning funeral piles, the later Jews applied the name of this Valley Ge Hinnom, Gehenna, to denote the place of eternal torment, and some of the Rabbins here fixed the “door of hell;” a sense in which it is used by our Lord.

Continuing this subject, read Matthew 10:28: **“Fear not them which kill the body, but ARE NOT ABLE TO KILL THE SOUL: but rather fear him which is able to destroy [APPOLUMI] both soul and body in hell [GEHENNA].”** It is useless for a Jehovah’s Witness to argue that this proves extinction of the soul, because this is the same Greek word used at Matthew 10:6 where Jesus instructed the apostles: **“Go rather to the lost [APPOLUMI] sheep of the house of Israel.”** Were these “lost” sheep non-existent? Were they “destroyed” sheep? Of course not! So the text, Matthew 10:28, shows that God can cause our souls to be lost [APPOLUMI] in *Gehenna*—forever.

“Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye SHALL fear: Fear HIM, WHO AFTER HE HATH KILLED hath power to CAST INTO HELL [GEHENNA]; yea, I say unto you, FEAR HIM” (Luke 12:4, 5).

Thayer’s Lexicon on Gehenna gives the following:

The valley of lamentation, or the sons of lamentation . . . the name of a valley on the S. and E. of Jerusalem, which was so called from the cries of the little children who were thrown into the fiery arms of Molech i.e., of an idol having the form of a bull. The Jews so abhorred the place after these horrible sacrifices had been abolished by King Josiah (II Kings 23:10), that they cast into it not only all manner of refuse, but even the dead bodies of animals and of unburied criminals who had been executed. And since fires were always needed to consume the dead bodies, that the air might not become tainted by the putrefaction, it came to pass that the place was called GEHENNA TOU PUROS [GEHENNA OF FIRE]; and then this name was transferred to that place in Hades where the wicked after death will suffer punishment.

But what about the Watchtower’s idea that the story of the rich man and Lazarus is only a parable? Will that not lessen the argument in favor of eternal punishment? The historic Christian faith does not hold the account to be a parable. An excellent treatment of this subject is given by John Wesley. From *The Works of John Wesley*, Volume VII, page 245:

But is the subsequent account merely a parable, or real history? It has been believed by many, and roundly asserted, to be a mere parable, because of one or two circumstances therein which are not easy to be accounted for. In particular, it is hard to conceive, how a person in hell could hold conversation with one in paradise. But, admitting we cannot account for this, will it over-balance an express assertion of our Lord: "**There was,**" says our Lord, "**a certain rich man.**"—Was there not? Did such a man never exist?

"**And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus.**" Was there, or was there not? Is it bold enough, positively to deny what our blessed Lord positively affirms? Therefore, we cannot reasonably doubt, but the whole narration, with all its circumstances, is exactly true. And Theophylact (one of the ancient commentators on the Scriptures) observes upon this text, that, "according to the tradition of the Jews, Lazarus lived at Jerusalem."

Next Wesley describes the entire account of the rich man and Lazarus as follows:

First, I will endeavor, with God's assistance, to explain this history. "**There was a certain rich man;**" and, doubtless, on that very account, highly esteemed among men,—"**who was clothed in purple and fine linen;**" and, consequently, esteemed the more highly, both as appearing suitably to his fortune, and as an encourager of trade;—"and fared sumptuously every day." Here was another reason for his being highly esteemed,—his hospitality and generosity,—both by those who frequently sat at his table, and the tradesmen that furnished it.

"**And there was a certain beggar;**" one in the lowest line of human infamy; "**named Lazarus,**" according to the Greek termination; in Hebrew, Eleazer. From his name we may gather, that he was well known in the city, and it was a scandal to him to be named.—"**Who was laid at his gate;**" although no pleasing spectacle; so that one might wonder he was suffered to lie there;—"full of sores;" of running ulcers;—"and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table." So the complicated affliction of poverty, pain, and want of bread, lay upon him at once! But it does not appear that any creature took the least notice of the despicable wretch! Only "**the dogs came and licked his sores.**" All the comfort which this world afforded him!

But see the change! "**The beggar died.**" Here ended poverty and pain:—"And was carried by angels;" nobler servants than any that attended the rich man;—"into Abraham's bosom:" So the Jews commonly termed what our blessed Lord styles paradise; the place "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest:" But see the change again! "**The rich man also died.**" What—must rich men also die? . . . "**And was buried;**" doubtless, with pomp enough, suitably to his quality . . .

"**And in hell he lifted up his eyes.**" O, what a change! How is the mighty fallen! But the word which is here rendered hell does not always mean the place of the damned. It is, literally, the invisible world; and it is of very wide extent, including the receptacle of separate spirits, whether good or bad (Note: This does not necessarily mean, however, that the righteous and evil are together; see quotation from *Smith's Bible Dictionary* in this chapter). "**He seeth Abraham afar off.**" Far, indeed! as far as from hell to paradise! Perhaps, "tenfold the length of this terrene." But how could this be? I cannot tell: But it is by no means incredible. For who knows "how far an angel kens," or a spirit divested of flesh and blood?—"And Lazarus in his bosom."

It is well known that, in the ancient feasts among the Jews, as well as the Romans, the guests did not sit down at the table, as it is now the custom to do; but lay on couches, each having a pillow at his left side, on which he supported his elbow; and he that sat next to him, on the right side, was said to lie in his bosom. It was in this sense that the Apostle John lay in his Master's bosom. Accordingly, the expression of Lazarus lying in Abraham's bosom implies that he was in the highest place of honour and happiness.

“And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me.”—Thou fool! What can Abraham do? What can any creature, yes, all the creation do, to break the laws of the bottomless pit? Whoever would escape from the place of torment, let him cry to God, the Father of mercy! Nay, but the time is past! Justice now takes place, and rejoices over mercy!—**“And send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame!”**

“How exceeding modest a request is this! He does not say, “That he may take me out of this flame.” He does not ask, “That he may bring me a cup of water, or as much as he might hold in the palm of his hand;” but barely, **“That he may dip”** were it but **“the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.”** No! It cannot be! No mercy can enter within the shades of hell!

But Abraham said, **“Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou tormented.”** Perhaps these words may supply us with an answer to an important question: How came this rich man to be in hell? It does not appear that he was a wicked man, in the common sense of the word; that he was a drunkard, a common swearer, a Sabbath-breaker, or that he lived in any known sin. It is probable he was a Pharisee; and as such was, in all the outward parts of religion, blameless.

How then did he come into **“the place of torment?”** If there was no other reason to be assigned, there is a sufficient one implied in those words, **“Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things;”** the things which thou hadst chosen for thy happiness. Thou didst receive the portion which thou hadst chosen, and canst have no portion above. **“And likewise Lazarus evil things.”** Not his evil things; for he did not choose them. But they were chosen for him by the wise providence of God: And **“now he is comforted, while thou art tormented.”**

“But, besides all this, there is a great gulf fixed:” A great chasm, a vast vacuity. Can any tell us what this is? What is the nature, what are the bounds, of it? Nay, none of the children of men; none but an inhabitant of the invisible world.—**“So that they who would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.”** Undoubtedly a disembodied spirit could pass through any space whatsoever. But the will of God, determining that none should go across the gulf, is a bound which no creature can pass.

Then he said, **“I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father’s house; for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they come also into this place of torment.”** Two entirely different motives have been assigned for this extraordinary request. Some ascribe it wholly to self love, to a fear of the bitter reproaches which, he might easily suppose, his brethren would pour upon him, if, in consequence of his example, and perhaps advice, they came to the same place of torment.

Others have imputed it to a nobler motive. They suppose, as the misery of the wicked will not be complete till the day of judgment, so neither will their wickedness. Consequently, they believe that, all that time, they may retain some sparks of mutual affection; and they, not improbably, imagine that this may have occasioned his desire to prevent their sharing his own torment.

“Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.” **“And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one went to them from the dead, they will repent.”** Who would not be of the same opinion? Might not any one reasonably suppose that a message solemnly delivered by one that came from the dead must have an irresistible force? Who would not think, “I myself could not possibly withstand such a preacher of righteousness?” This I conceive to be the meaning of the words. I will now endeavor, with the help of God, to apply them.

It is no more sinful to be rich than to be poor. But it is dangerous beyond expression. Therefore, I remind all of you that are of this number, that have the conveniences of life, and something over, that ye walk upon slippery ground. Ye are every moment on the verge of hell! **“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for you to enter into the kingdom of heaven” . . .**

Whoever thou art that sharest in the sin of this rich man, were it no other than 'faring sumptuously every day,' thou shalt as surely be a sharer in his punishment, except thou repent, as if thou wert already crying for a drop of water to cool thy tongue!

"And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy upon me!"—I do not remember, in all the Bible, any prayer made to a saint, but this. And if we observe who made it,—a man in hell,—and with what success, we shall hardly wish to follow the precedent. . . You are not past the great gulf, but have it still in your power to choose whether you will be attended by angels or fiends when your soul quits its earthly mansion.

Now stretch out your hand to eternal life or eternal death!

. . . He makes another request: **"I pray thee, send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify to them."** It is not impossible that other unhappy spirits may wish well to the relations they have left behind them . . . We are indeed apt to think, like that unhappy spirit, **"If one went to them from the dead, they will repent. But Abraham said, If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."**

It is certain that no human spirit, while it is in the body, can persuade another to repent; can work in him an entire change, both of heart and life; a change from universal wickedness, to universal holiness. And suppose that spirit discharged from the body, it is no more able to do this than it was before. No power less than that which created it first can create any soul anew. . . .

No angel, much less any human spirit, whether in the body or out of the body, can bring one soul **"from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."** It might very possibly fright him to death, or to the belief of any speculative truth; but it could not frighten him unto spiritual life.

Several quotations from Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* will prove valuable. The first is on Hell, Volume II, page 343:

The term used in Old English to designate the world of the dead generally with all the sad and painful associations of the dark region into which the living disappear. In modern English it has the specific sense of the place and condition of penalty destined for the finally impenitent among the dead. With this it expresses also the abode of evil spirits.

The same volume under Gehenna, page 119:

It signifies the place of punishment for rebellious or apostate Jews in the presence of the righteous. Gehinnom or Gehenna is not actually mentioned with this signification in the OT, but it is it and no other place that is implied in Isaiah 50:11 **"in a place of pain shall ye lie down,"** and 66:24 with this new connotation.

Further, the punishment of the apostate Jews in Isaiah 66:24 is conceived as eternal: **"They shall look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh."** The punishment of Gehenna is implied in Dan. 12:2, **'some to shame and everlasting abhorrence'** which occurs in these two passages, and in these only, and the reference in both is to Gehenna.

On page 344, again under Gehenna:

The terrible associations of the place, the recollections of the horrors perpetrated in it and the defilement inflicted on it, the fires said to have been kept burning in it in order to consume the foul and corrupt objects that were thrown into it, made it a natural and unmistakable symbol of

dire evil torment, wasting penalty, absolute ruin. So it came to designate the place of future punishment, and the Talmudic theology spoke of the door of hell as being in the valley of Hinnom.

Page 345:

In the theology of the Talmud and Midrash, *Gehinnom*, Gehenna meant the scene of penalty, while in certain phases of Jewish belief it appears to have been regarded at once as a place of punishment for the heathen and as a place of purgatorial detention for imperfect Israelites. But with all this there is reason to say its original sense was that of the final place of retribution, that it was distinguished from Hades and from every form of an intermediate state, and that it had this meaning with the Jewish people generally in Christ's time.

The apocalyptic writings, which speak of a separation of the just from the unjust between death and the resurrection, also speak of a final punishment after the judgment, and describe the place of that retribution in terms which point to Gehenna.

Matthew 18:8 warns:

Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt [Jehovah's Witnesses scoff and ridicule this], or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be CAST INTO EVERLASTING FIRE [TO PUR TO AIONION].

Revelation 14:9-11:

If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented (basanizo) with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment (basanismos) ascendeth up for ever and ever.

The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia regarding Gehenna (Volume IV, page 443):

Thus it became customary to call the place of punishment of the Jewish wicked "**valley of Hinnom.**" The name was retained after the idea of the place of punishment in the last day had severed itself from that locality and its connotation expanded to mean the place of punishment for all men . . . The place of everlasting punishment after the last judgment was located by the Pharisees under the earth. . . . It is placed in opposition to the "dominion of God" or "eternal life" and denotes the state which falls to the final lot of the ungodly, and this, according to Matthew 10:28, affects both soul and body.

Volume V, page 109 concerning Hades:

The Israelitic conception of Sheol rests upon the belief that the decomposition of the dead body, by means of which dust returns to dust, does not involve complete annihilation, only that in death the "shade" of the living man separates from the body and takes up its abode in Sheol.

Jehovah's Witnesses will argue (in spite of what the Scriptures say) that Jehovah is only a God of love, and would never send anyone to the kind of Hell we describe! They are not acquainted with the real Jehovah, but only a Watchtower Jehovah, a figment of their imagination! Jehovah said to Moses: **"I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy"** (Exodus 33: 19). The New Testament quotes this at Romans 9:15.

Speaking of believers, Paul said at Ephesians 1:5: **"Having predestinated (PROORIZO, determined before, foreordained) us unto adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of HIS WILL."** Here we see that it is GOD'S WILL (not ours) in action here. Verse 11: **"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of HIS OWN WILL."**

In Paul's writings we learn much about the ways of Jehovah. The Jehovah's Witnesses (who are certainly misnamed!) criticize God for being the kind of God the Bible says He is. Read Romans 9:16, 18-23 regarding this:

So then it is NOT OF HIM THAT WILLETH, nor of him that runneth, BUT OF GOD that sheweth mercy . . . Therefore hath he mercy ON WHOM HE WILL have mercy, and who he will he hardeneth (SKLERUNO). Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? [That is to say, Why does He find fault with us if he made us the way we are?] . . . Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus? Hath not the potter POWER OVER THE CLAY, of the same lump to make ONE VESSEL UNTO HONOUR, AND ANOTHER UNTO DISHONOUR?

What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY ON THE VESSELS OF MERCY, WHICH HE AFORE PREPARED [PROETO-MAZO] UNTO GLORY.

What is the opposite of **"a vessel of mercy?"** A reprobate. Read II Corinthians 13:5: **"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you, except indeed ye be reprobates?"**

Indeed, Jehovah's Witnesses know nothing at all about this Jehovah! ALL is under His authoritative rule and decree, whether we care to admit it or not.

Before any rage in protest against Jehovah for what He is, see His words, Isaiah 45:9:

"Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?"

We had better learn who and what God is and keep silent before Him after we do so.

Commenting, *Matthew Henry's Commentary* says, Volume IV, page 253:

For reproof to those of the church's enemies that opposed this salvation, or those of her friends that despaired of it: Woe unto him that strives with his Maker! God is the Maker of all things, and therefore our Maker, which is the reason why we should always submit to him and never contend with him.

Sinful man is indeed a quarrelsome creature; but let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Men are but earthen pots, nay, they are broken potsherds, and are so very much by their mutual contentions. They are dashed in pieces one against another; and if they are disposed to strive, let them strive with one another, let them meddle with their match; but let them not dare to contend with him that is infinitely above them, which is as senseless and absurd as for the clay to find fault with the potter: Shall the clay say to him that forms it, "What makest thou? Why dost thou make me of this shape and not that?"

Nay, it is as if the clay should be in such a heat and passion with the potter as to tell him that he has no hands, or that he works as awkwardly as if he had none. "Shall the clay pretend to be wiser than the potter and therefore control him?" He that gave us being, that gave us this being, may design concerning us, and DISPOSE OF US AS HE PLEASES; and it is impudent presumption for us to prescribe to him [Emphasis mine].

Shall we impeach God's wisdom, or question his power, who are ourselves so curiously, so wonderfully made? Shall we say, He has no hands, whose made us and in whose hands we are? The doctrine of God's sovereignty has enough in it to silence all our discontents and objections against the methods of his providence and grace, (Romans 9:20, 21). It is as unnatural for the child to find fault with the parents, to say to the father, "**What begettest thou?**" or the mother, "**What has thou brought forth?**" Why was I not begotten and born an angel, exempt from the infirmities of human nature and the calamities of human life?" Must not those who are children of men expect to share in the common lot and fare as others fare? If God is our Father, where is the honor we owe to him by submitting to his will?

Opposers will use another example to make it appear as if we can pit our will against that of Almighty God. They believe that doing so we will prove to be His match. They quote Psalm 78:41, "**Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and LIMITED the Holy One of Israel.**"

Here are some other translations:

- Yea, they turned back, and tempted God, and PROVOKED the Holy One of Israel (*Bagster's Septuagint*).
- They actually turned back and tempted God, and PROVOKED TO WRATH the Holy One of Israel (*Thomason's Septuagint*).
- And they turned again and tempted God, and PROVOKED the Holy One of Israel (*ASV*).
With doubts of God again and again, that PAINED the Majestic One of Israel (*Moffat*).
- Yea, again and again they tempted God, and the Holy One of Israel they VEXED (*Expositor's Bible*).
- Always new challenges to God's power, NEW REBELLIONS against the Holy One of Israel" (*Ronald Knox*).

It is only bigoted, egotistical men who think they can thwart the will of Almighty God. No one has ever limited the Holy One of Israel and no one ever will!

We read of the sad end of sinful men, unborn by the Spirit:

“Depart from me, ye cursed, INTO EVERLASTING FIRE [TO PUR TO AIONION], prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

“So shall it be at the end of the world [age]: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the FURNACE OF FIRE [TEN KAMINON TOU PUROS]: there shall be the wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 13:49, 50).

Jude 7 reads: **“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth AN EXAMPLE, suffering the vengeance OF ETERNAL FIRE.”**

The *Let God Be True* book says, in its typical childish fashion, page 93:

But are not Satan the Devil and his demons down in hell keeping the fires and making it hard for those who are in it? That is what is taught by Christendom’s clergy, but you will be surprised to know the Devil never was in such a place. The Devil’s human servant, the king of Babylon, was doomed to go to hell, the Bible hell. But Satan the Devil who made himself Lucifer in his organization is really the one spoken to under the figure of “the king of Babylon” in these words. “Hell from beneath is moved for thee, at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations” (Isaiah 14:9). If the Devil had been there constantly, how could hell be moved to meet him?

Without a shred of evidence to confirm their statements, the Watchtower Society leads the Witnesses along, like animals to the slaughter. The above is typical of material contained in *Let God Be True*. The Witnesses will believe what the Society tells them, because they fear the New World organization.

Is there a human “king of Babylon” only? It is true that Satan is spoken to in Isaiah 14 under the figure of the king of Babylon. But in recognizing this, let us not ignore the king who literally sat upon the throne. What does Isaiah say of him? *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, Vol. IV, page 86:

The king of Babylon, having so much wealth in his dominions and the absolute command of it, by the help of that *ruled the nations* (v. 6), gave them law, read them their doom, and at his pleasure *weakened the nations* (v. 12), that they might not be able to make head against him. Such vast and victorious armies did he bring into the field, that, which soever way he looked, he *made the earth to tremble, and shook kingdoms*, (v. 16); all his neighbors were afraid of him, and were forced to submit to him. No man could do this by his own personal strength, but by the numbers he had at his back. Great tyrants, by making some do what they will, make others suffer what they will. How piteous is the case of mankind, which thus seems to be in a combination against itself, and its own rights and liberties, which could not be ruined but by its own strength!

The wretched abuse of all this wealth and power, which the king of Babylon was guilty of, in two instances:

(1.) Great oppression and cruelty. He is known by the name *oppressor* (v. 4). He has *the sceptre of the rulers* (v. 5), has the command of all the princes about him; but it is *the staff of the wicked*, a staff with which he supports himself in his wickedness and wickedly strikes all about him.

He smote the people, not in justice, for their correction and reformation, but in wrath (v. 6), to gratify his own peevish resentment, and that *with a continual stroke*, pursued them with his forces, and gave them no respite, no breathing time, no cessation of arms.

He ruled the nations, but he ruled them *in anger*, everything he said and did was in a passion; so that he who had the government all about him, had no government of himself. *He made the world as a wilderness*, as if he had taken pride in being the plague of his generation and a curse to mankind, v. 17. Great princes usually glory in building cities, but he gloried in destroying them; see Psalms 9:6.

Two particular instances, worse than all the rest, are here given of his tyranny: (a.) That he was severe to his captives (v. 17): *He opened not the house of his prisoners*; he *did not let them loose homeward* (so the marginal reads it); he kept them in close confinement, and never would suffer any to return to their own land . . . (b.) That he was oppressive to his own subjects (v. 20): *Thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people*; and what did he get by that, when the wealth of the land and the multitude of the people are the strength and honour of the prince, who never rules so safely, so gloriously, as in the hearts of the people?

(2.) Great pride and haughtiness. Notice is here taken of his *pomp*, the extravagancy of his retinue, v. 11. He affected to appear in the utmost significance. But that was not the worst: It was the temper of his mind, and the elevation of that, that ripened him for ruin (v. 13, 14); *Thou hast said in thy heart* (like Lucifer), *I will ascend into heaven*. Here is the language of his vain glory, borrowed perhaps from that of the angels who fell, who not content with their first estate, the post assigned them, would vie with God, and become not only independent of Him, but equal with Him. Or perhaps it refers to the story of Nebuchadnezzar, who, when he would be more than a man, was justly turned into a brute (Dan. 4:30).

The king of Babylon promises himself, (1.) That in pomp and power he shall surpass all his neighbors . . . (2.) That he shall particularly insult over God's Mount Zion, which Belshazzar, in his last drunken frolic, seems to have had a particular spite against when he called for the vessels of the temple at Jerusalem, to profane them; see Daniel 5:2. In the same humor he here said, I will sit upon the mount of the congregation (it is the same word that is used for the holy convocations), in the sides of the north; so Mount Zion is said to be situated, Psalms 48:2 . . .

(3) That he shall vie with the God of Israel, of whom he had indeed heard glorious things, that he had his residence *above the heights of the clouds*. "But thither," says he, "I will ascend, and be as great as he; I will be like him whom they call the Most High."

(4) That he shall himself be deified after his death, as some of the first founders of the Assyrian monarchy were, and stars had even their names from them. "But," says he, "I will exalt my throne above them all."

3. The utter ruin that should be brought upon him. It is foretold, (1.) That his wealth and power should be broken, and a final period put to his pomp and pleasure . . . (2.) That he himself should be seized . . . (3.) That he should be slain, and *go down to the congregation of the dead* . . . His pomp is brought down to the grave (v. 11), that is, it perishes with him . . .

4. The many triumphs that should be in his fall. (1.) Those whom he had been a great tyrant and terror to will be glad they are rid of him (v. 7, 8). (2.) The congregation of the dead will bid him welcome to them, especially those whom he had barbarously hastened thither (v. 9, 10). "*Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming*, and to compliment thee upon thy arrival at their dark and dreadful regions." The chief ones of the earth, who when they were alive were kept in awe by him and durst not come near him, but rose from their thrones to resign them to him, shall upbraid him with it when he comes into the state of the dead.

They shall go forth to meet him, as they used to do when he made his public entry into cities he had become master of; with such a parade he shall be introduced into these regions of horror, to make his disgrace the more grievous to him.

They shall scoffingly rise from their thrones and seats there, and ask him if he will please to sit down with them, as he used to do in their thrones on earth?

The confusion that will then cover him they shall make a jest of: “Hast thou also become as weak as we?” Who would have thought it? It is what thou thyself didst not expect it would ever come to when thou wast in everything too hard for us. Thou that didst then rank thyself among the immortal gods, art thou come to take thy fate among us poor mortal men? Where is thy pomp now, and where is thy mirth?

Now this reception of the king of Babylon into the regions of the dead, which is here described, surely is something more than a flight of fancy, and is designed to teach these solid truths:—(1.) That there is an invisible world, a world of spirits, to which the souls of men remove at death and in which they exist and act in a state of separation from the body. (2.) That separate souls have acquaintance and converse with each other, though we have none with them. . . . (3.) That death and hell will be death and hell indeed to those of this world’s pomp and the fulness of its pleasures.

In its typical fashion the *Let God Be True* book pronounces this erroneous decree on page 97:

After Jesus pronounced judgment on the “goats,” who do not support God’s kingdom to which Christ’s brothers are called, he declares respecting the “goats:” “These will depart into everlasting cutting-off (Greek, kolasis), but the righteous ones into everlasting life.” (Matthew 25:46, NW ED) So the everlasting punishment of the “goats” is their everlastingly being cut off from all life.

However, at I John 4:18 the *New World* translation itself translates the Greek word KOLASIS as “restraint, correction, punishment,” and *The Emphatic Diaglott* renders Matthew 25:46: “And these shall go forth to the aionian cutting-off,” with footnote: “THAT IS, IN THE FIRE MENTIONED IN VERSE 41.”

Let God Be True on page 91 poses the problem as to where Hell is. They use the case of Jonah in the whale to try and prove their theory of where Hell is. They quote Jonah 2:1, 2: “**Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish’s belly. And he said, I called by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; Out of the belly of hell [Sheol] cried I, and thou heardest my voice.**”

They conclude from this that the fish’s belly became Jonah’s Sheol. But here is what they do not know: The Bible shows that Jonah prayed two times, from two different places!

First, he prayed from the belly (Hebrew, BETEN) of Sheol. This word also carries the translation womb. Then he prayed from the fish’s belly (Hebrew, MEIM). Here is how Charles Thomson’s translation of the Septuagint reads at this verse: “And from out of the belly of the great whale, Jonas prayed to the Lord his God, and said: In my affliction I cried [past tense] to the Lord my God, and He hearkened [past tense] to me. Thou didst hear [past tense] my cry from the womb of Hades, Thou didst hearken [past tense] to my prayer.”

Note: Jonah first prayed from the depths of the sea (2:3, 5-7) and was heard, and the Lord delivered him from drowning by having the whale swallow him. It was after three days and three nights there (1:17) that Jonah then prayed again (2:1), following which the Lord had the whale vomit him out upon the dry land (2:10).

In this poetic chapter Jonah parallels his deliverance from imminent death in the sea's depths to a removal from Sheol itself. Not that the two are identical, but that they are similar in many ways. Notice verse 4: "**Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight.**" Jonah had willfully withdrawn from standing in God's presence. Now God had taken him at his word, and, as it seemed, cast him out of it.

This idea of being expelled from God's presence—which is truly the state of the souls dwelling in Sheol—is what caused Jonah to liken the depths of the sea (v. 5) to the abode of the wicked dead (v. 2). Furthermore, he knew that he was there "**for ever**" (v. 6), so far as his own power of deliverance was concerned—another fact true also of Sheol. And even as he was alive and conscious when in his Sheol-like condition, so are those who have entered into the true Sheol. They are no more extinct than Jonah was! And for them, Christ has revealed (Luke 16:19-31), there is no escape. This then, and not the fish's belly or the sea, is the true Sheol. Discern carefully lest you be found believing every oracle sent forth by *The Watchtower Society*. Consider:

"It is so plain that the Bible hell is mankind's common grave that even an honest little child can understand it, but not the religious theologians" (*Let God Be True*, page 92). They must say this in order to keep the Witnesses away from real theological investigation. They have to make it appear a sin to conduct an honest (and thorough) investigation into the Scriptures. What they really mean in the above quotation is that a child who is easily led and who is uneducated can be easily deceived. One who is not mature enough to think out theological matters for himself wants or needs someone else to think for him. This encourages some adults with dependent minds to remain immature.

If Watchtower is the truth and is so easy to understand, why is there such an array of Scripture against it?

- Why do they have such difficulty in making known this "truth?"
- Why the necessity of rewriting parts of the Bible?
- Yes—why the necessity of **ADDING TO** the Bible?
- Why the denial of almost every doctrine of the original historic Christian faith?
- Why the repudiation of almost everything Christians have held since the days when Jesus was here?

Paul says: "**As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach unto you ANY OTHER GOSPEL UNTO YOU THAN THAT YE HAVE RECEIVED, let him be accursed**" (Galatians 1:9).

Here is an example of the typical Watchtower method of wresting the Scriptures, by quoting **OUT OF CONTEXT** and then building heresy upon it.

In Ezekiel 18:20, one of their favorite texts, quoted out of context: "**The soul that sinneth, it shall die,**" then the Jehovah's Witness shuts his Bible, for that is as far as he cares to go!

For our answer to him we just read on. Verse 21 reads: **“BUT IF the wicked will TURN FROM all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and DO THAT WHICH IS LAWFUL AND RIGHT, he shall surely LIVE, HE SHALL NOT DIE.”**

Yet, those who believed and turned to God (including Ezekiel), to whom this verse was written, died! And God here promised that they would not die! Applying this text Watchtower-fashion, God was a liar. Either that or the Watchtower is lying. Two contradictory teachings cannot both be true.

Evidently God was not speaking about physical death when he said the sinning soul would die. Both believers and unbelievers die physically. Certainly Ezekiel turned from his sins; yet he died! We read in verses 27 and 28:

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, HE SHALL NOT DIE.

But they died!

You see, this is speaking about a death that Jehovah’s Witnesses know nothing about. It is speaking about **SPIRITUAL DEATH OF THE SOUL**. This is the condition of those who are lost and who shall be turned into Hell. The scoffers will scoff no more when turned into that place. Jehovah’s Witnesses raise an objection to this doctrine. They do not understand passages like Revelation 20:14: **“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death . . . the lake of fire.”**

Hades is not the **“lake of fire.”** That is Gehenna. Those in Hades awaiting the final judgment are like those in death row in prison. They have already been sentenced, but the sentence will not be carried out until the order for execution arrives. There is a date set, and the execution order arrives at that time. On judgment day the awful words will be spoken:

“Depart from me, ye cursed, into EVERLASTING FIRE, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

In *Harper’s Bible Dictionary* on the subject:

From being merely the shadowy abode of departed spirits the conception of hell was elaborated until it stood for a place of unspeakable terrors, especially in the so-called Apocalyptic Literature, of which the Revelation of St. John is the chief example in the N. T. The concept occurs in some of the sayings of Jesus (Matthew 5:29; 23:33), and in several of his parables (Matthew 25); and it is implied in such teachings as John 3:16-18, 36; 15:6.

Same dictionary, under Everlasting Punishment:

He (Jesus) has freed a man from an evil spirit. His critics, observing the deed, declared that he could “cast out demons” because he was himself in league with “the prince of demons.” Jesus took this to mean that they were morally blind—so committed to their own ideas that they could look on a deed which judged by any standard should be esteemed good, and say that it was evil and wrought by an evil power.

He said that men who talked like this were doing far worse than defaming him: they were blaspheming the Holy Spirit by whom eventually every good deed was done. He implied that they had become so hardened that they could no longer respond to the appeal of the good. In that case they could never repent, and if they could not repent God could not forgive them. They were, in a word, so impervious to the Holy Spirit that they were beyond redemption.

This incident shows the true meaning of everlasting punishment. In sharp contrast stands the idea of eternal life. The emphasis in the phrase “eternal life” is not on time but on worth . . . Sometimes the contrast is between having eternal life and “perishing,” as in the familiar John 3:16. To “perish” DOES NOT MEAN TO CEASE TO EXIST; it means failure to come to that TRUE LIFE which God intended every man to find. Final failure will come to no man except of his own will; it will be the result of his refusal to accept eternal life. His continuance in existence will be continuance in “death” (the absence of true life) in a future life as much as in this world (Emphasis mine).

Said the Psalmist: “**Though I walk THROUGH the valley** (Hebrew, *gay*, a low plain or gorge) **of the shadow of DEATH, I will fear no evil; FOR THOU ART WITH ME**” (Psalm 23:4). “**In the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?**” (Jeremiah 12:5). When you must finally stand at the portals of death, what will your actions be? Will there be someone to guide you through the valley and over Jordan’s chilly waters to the other side? Or will you face those cold, dark waters all alone? The judgment you must also face—all alone—for it is your trial!

Consider these words, John 3:26, *Amplified New Testament*:

And he who believes on—has faith in, clings to, relies on—the Son has (now possesses) eternal life. But whoever disobeys—is unbelieving toward, refuses to trust in, disregards, is not subject to—the Son will never see (experience) life. But instead the wrath of God abides on him—God’s displeasure remains on him; His indignation hangs over him continually.

There is no need for you to fear, if you would be saved. “**If a man keep my saying, HE SHALL NEVER SEE DEATH**” said Jesus (John 8:51). What is your reaction to this invitation? When Jesus spoke on these matters the Jews accused Him of being demonized. They said: “**Now we know that thou hast a devil!**” He had promised them that they would never die if they would believe! It is the very same accusation that Jehovah’s Witnesses level today against Christians who hold to this truth that Jesus taught.

You may be free forever from fear of eternal punishment, for Jesus said: “**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I GIVE UNTO THEM ETERNAL LIFE, and they shall NEVER PERISH**” (John 10:27, 28). Further on: “**I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE; and whosoever liveth and BELIEVETH IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE**” (John 11:25, 26). Thus he shows us the difference between physical and spiritual death. Though a Christian dies physically, he lives on spiritually.

The Watchtower Society insists that Satan challenged Jehovah's supremacy and that an issue was raised over who was supreme. They claim that Satan said to Jehovah that He could not put someone on earth who would remain faithful amid trials unto death. They say Jesus proved that Satan was wrong by doing all this. They call this the issue of "Universal Sovereignty." The Bible does not teach this, but they believe it anyway. To them Armageddon (Revelation 16:16) will "prove" that Jehovah is supreme by destroying all non-Jehovah's Witnesses.

However, with all thanks to God, the redeemed can now say: **"NOT BY WORKS of righteousness, which WE HAVE DONE, but according to his MERCY he saved us, by the WASHING OF REGENERATION and RENEWING OF THE HOLY GHOST"** (Titus 3:5). You can be delivered NOW!

"Then said one unto him, Lord, are they few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:23, 24). This is what you must face: PRESENT SALVATION OR ETERNAL PUNISHMENT. Consider what is offered: **"I am the door; by me if any man enters [present tense] in, HE SHALL BE SAVED"** (John 10:9). Paul, writing to the Romans, says: **"But God commendeth HIS LOVE TOWARD us, in that, WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD, we shall be SAVED FROM WRATH [OF GOD] THROUGH HIM"** (Romans 5:8, 9).

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord JESUS, and shalt BELIEVE in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, THOU SHALT BE SAVED" (Romans 10:9). **"For by GRACE are ye saved by FAITH; and that NOT OF YOURSELVES, it is the GIFT OF GOD: NOT OF WORKS, lest no man should boast"** (Ephesians 2:8, 9). You must accept it free or not at all. Again, if you reject the Gospel there is no need to await an Armageddon to know your fate: **"He that believeth not is CONDEMNED ALREADY"** (John 3:18).

It is the writer's desire that at this moment that you (if you are unsaved) will yield your all to the Saviour. You may come to Christ on the basis of the faith you have at this moment. To all who will do so: **"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them [the Spirit of anti-Christ]: because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world"** (I John 4:4).

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 24, 25).

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit" (Galatians 6:18).

~ end of chapter 5 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
